

Honors Civics

Credit – ½

Term(s) – 1 Semester

Text(s): *Government in America, People, Politics and Policy*, George C. Edwards III, Martin P. Wattenberg, Robert L. Lineberry, 2002

Prerequisites:

While there are no prerequisites for Honors Civics, it is highly recommended and encouraged that students have taken honors level of LA-9 and achieved at least an 85. Further, Honors Civics is intended for Sophomores.

Course Description:

Civics is a one-semester course that is required for graduation. Honors Civics is a course designed for the more academically talented student as an alternative to Standard Civics. This course will be different from the traditional offering in the following ways:

- ◆ The student will be expected to be involved to a greater degree in classroom discussions and student interaction.
- ◆ Instruction will focus on the higher levels of thinking that requires more analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
- ◆ Students will be required to complete an assigned research project involving materials outside the text.
- ◆ Students will become more familiar with “primary” research materials.
- ◆ Students will be encouraged to use the school and community as centers of research.

Honors Civics has been designed to challenge students who have shown both an interest and ability in the area of Social Studies. Honors Civics is particularly recommended for those students who are college bound and/or intend to take American Studies as juniors. This course is not recommended for freshmen.

Course Content:

1. Historical Beginnings of the United States
2. American Constitutional Principles
3. National and Illinois Bills of Rights and the Constitution Test
4. American Political Behavior including Political Parties, Suffrage and Elections
5. The Three Branches of the American Government
6. Comparative economic and political systems

Course Format:

The format varies with the material, but material will be presented through the following: full class discussion, small group work, role plays, audio-visual technologies, textbook and outside readings.

Course Expectations:

Honors Civics is a challenging, honors-level class that places a strong emphasis on higher order thinking skills. Students will be expected to read not only textbook passages, but also, primary historical documents and other handouts. Students will have regular experiences in individual research projects. There is also a heavy emphasis on the development of writing skills through unit essays, essay-formatted tests, and a semester project research project. There is also a heavy emphasis on the development of communication skills through in-class discussions, debates, a mock Senate, mock trials and final exam presentations. Students will be expected to regularly participate in full-class discussion and within small-group settings.

Course Assessment:

The following activities will be assessed with an equal emphasis on in-class participation, essay tests and take-home essays. The final exam grade is based on the written and presented results of a semester long individual research project.